

TS-HK-E 26062

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WHITE HOUSE
SITUATION ROOM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
22 March 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Cambodia

(Situation Report as of 1600 EST)

1. The Communists are taking a tough line with the new leadership in Phnom Penh.

2. After avoiding direct comment on events in Cambodia for three days, North Vietnam labeled Cambodia's new leaders as a "pro-American ultra-rightist group" in an authoritative Nhan Dan statement on 22 March. Arguing that Sihanouk's ouster had been engineered by the US, Nhan Dan stated that "our people fully support" the struggle of the Cambodian people against the US and the new leadership. This statement and a reference to "stepping up the fight" against the US "lackeys" may be meant as a warning to the Lon Nol-Sirik Matak government that the Communists are prepared to fight unless the new leaders are accommodating.

3. The Chinese Communists, for their part, appear to be sticking with Sihanouk, at least for the present. They continue to refer to him as chief-of-state and they have broadcast Sihanouk's lengthy apology and attack on the new regime.

4. Sihanouk's weekend statements in Peking suggest that, in his present state of mind, he is susceptible to whatever plans the Communists may have to overthrow the new

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Attached to TS/over memo HK-E 26062

Phnom Penh leadership. Although counting himself out as a prominent figure in Cambodia's future, Sihanouk states that his "duty" was to aid the "struggle...from the inside and from the outside to erase this coup." He has stated, moreover, that Communist China and the Soviet Union have agreed to support him during the period he is in exile. Sihanouk is not likely to play the role of a Communist stooge, however, and his statements may be partially designed to bluff jittery opponents in the Cambodian capital.

5. The government, meanwhile, has called on the Geneva co-chairmen to "reconstitute" the International Control Commission to meet the threat of foreign troops on Cambodian soil. It has also called for "official negotiations" with the Vietnamese Communists to "demand" the withdrawal of their troops. In addition to these diplomatic moves, Cambodian units on the border are maintaining contact with the Communists, although only a few light skirmishes have been reported.

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